"American Foreign Trade"

THE question that lies back of Charles M. Pepper's book, *American Foreign Trade,* is whether or not the United States is to become the world's greatest commercial nation. Mr. Pepper, who was at one time foreign trade adviser to the Department of State and is the author of *To-morrow in Cuba, Panama to Patagonia* and other books, is too sensible a person to try to return an unqualified answer. As he says at the outset, the war, which seemed at first no more than an interlude in the drama of international commerce, turned out to be a tragedy and the forerunner of economic events of which the outcome cannot be predicted. This country has become a world power in commerce, and whether or not it will remain so will chiefly depend on whether we take a purely domestic view of our foreign trade or formulate and make effective a world policy in respect of it.

A world policy would require us to recognize "that exports are only one factor in foreign trade; in other words, that this is a question of mutual markets. It [the larger view] presumes that the manufacturer in the United States is ready to seek the market abroad as a primary market. It involves understanding of the United States as a lending country with the opportunities and the responsibilities that belong to a creditor nation."

The basis of anything worth while in this regard is necessarily information, more information and then some more information. And this Mr. Pepper endeavors to supply. When he talks about British trade policy, for example, he goes back to Edmund Burke. When he talks about American trade policy he goes behind the period of the civil war for his start. He properly lays emphasis, the moment he comes to speak of Russia, on Constantinople as an international mart. He devotes three chapters in twenty-one to South America.

This is a readable book. It is not a maze of statistics nor is it written in unintelligible jargon. Any one with a moderate knowledge of history and of trade can read it and get things out of it. Footnotes are few. The appendix contains several American tariff provisions, the text of our protectorate treaty with Hayti, and some of Eastern agreements. There is a good index.

AMERICAN FOREIGN TRADE. By Charles M. Pepper. Century Company.

"The Other Side of the Wall"

By GRANT M. OVERTON.

HERE is a novel of Lakeside, Chicago, so amazingly well done as entirely to justify its publishers in the belief that the author is a "discovery."

The book is *The Other Side of the Wall.* The author is Henry Justin Smith. He is news editor of the Chicago *Daily News.* It is his first novel. The present writer has seen only one other thing from his pen—a little Chicago sketch in the *Atlantic Monthly* some months ago.

Mr. Smith is one of those sympathizing bystanders who are much scarcer among writers than among people generally. He has a keen eye, and the severe verdicts which his intellect would lead him to dispense are half the time handed out only in the form of a suspended sentence, because the just intellect is housed in the same body with a warmly human heart.

He writes a little austerely. He is economical of words. But he gets the right words and never misses his effect. You think of good etching as you read him. In the midst of commonplace scenery and tiresome people he is able to introduce a poetic touch. A lot of deadly people are having a beach party. But over the lake the moon was rising "like a naked bather." Or look at this: "At last, the tall, chocolate colored Fannington, with its medallions gleaming in the noonday sun, and Jimmy, the second janitor, washing windows." Everything there! No wonder the novel concludes with an author's letter to Carl Sandburg. These Westerners are going to save contemporary American literature by getting it out of English wagon tracks and travelling on a broad prairie of free style, free technique, free subject matter and a different structure. Success to them!

The subject matter, in the instance of *The Other Side of the Wall,* is stuff that would have been the wreck of some very experienced story tellers. Lakeside, as Mr. Smith paints it, is one of those excrescences common to all large cities in which every one lives beyond his means and tries to outdo his neighbor. When you say the giddy whirl you've said it. Broadway is simple compared to the complex inanity of life in Lakeside. The elements of the story are not new; Mr. Smith refuses to "touch up" his people, and the result is a triumph for his method of telling his story—utterly naturalistic, human, without affectation, with a sense of humor, with kindliness behind his satire. If he didn't do it so well it would be nothing; as it is, you finish the book with more reservations than are necessary in concluding a treaty. Was it worth doing? Our personal conclusion is emphatically that it was.

This Lakeside is dominated by Barton Fanning, banker, whose realty performances culminate in his downfall. There is a story of young lovers, a couple who are in Lakeside but not of it. There is also the story of a young married pair who are in Lakeside and of it, too, until the first draft of 1917 took Lance Happerth to camp. In the last half of the book we get training camp scenes, though nearly always through the eyes of one man, a soldier in the making. They are done with the same care and reserve as Lakeside. The book defies any one to find a single exaggeration in it. It is without grip on the reader. It appeals to his sense of veracity and of humor; of reflection, too. But the reminder of Frank Norris is faint, for it has none of Norris's epical quality, his tensity, his whirlwind force. When you finished Norris you felt as though a weight had been lifted from your chest. When you finish *The Other Side of the Wall* you admire the exact mirroring all the way through and wish—wish—— Good heavens! what is it you wish? Mainly that he will write another novel, and then another.

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE WALL. By Henry Justin Smith. Doubleday, Page & Co.

IN *Avowals* George Moore praises Rudyard Kipling's diction.

"I envy Mr. Kipling," he says, "his copious and sonorous vocabulary, especially his neologisms; he writes with the whole language, with the language of the Bible, and with the language of the streets. He can do this, for he possesses the inkpot which turns the vilest tin idiom into gold. . . .

"Mr. Kipling's world is a barracks full of oaths and clatter of sabres; but his language is so copious, rich and sonorous that one is tempted to say that none since the Elizabethans have written so copiously. Shelley and Wordsworth, Landor and Pater wrote with part of the language, but who else, except Whitman, has written with the whole language since the Elizabethans? 'The flannelled fool at the wicket, the muddied oaf at the goal' is wonderful language. He writes with the eye that apreciates all that the eye can see."

JOHN HALL WHEELOCK, the poet, never writes down a word until the whole poem is complete in his mind, whether of four or several hundred lines in length. Give him the first line of any poem in his four volumes and he will recite the rest from memory. Dictaphone in his head undoubtedly.

WE gather that if there were a theatrical *Best of Their Kind* Booth Tarkington's *Clarence* would have to be in it.